

APPENDIX A

Automatic task focus swapping during browser wait time

Title of Invention (Short & Descriptive)

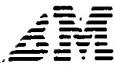
Automatic task focus swapping during browser wait time

Disclosure No. RO897-0329	Functional Manager S. A. Horn	Receiving Date 09/24/97	Receiving Time 07:25:38			
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Table 1. Critical Dates Information

Date invention workable:	9/23/97
Used or Planned for product:	N
If so, Product Name?	
Release?	
Announce Date?	
Public Demonstration or Use:	N
If so, When?	
Where?	
Disclosed to Non-IBMer:	N
If so, When?	
Where?	
CDA in place?	
Use in Manufacturing:	N
If so, When?	
Where?	
Product Name?	

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Problem

Browsing the web is a lot of waiting. You can do other tasks, while you wait, but it is cumbersome to switch between tasks.

Solution

When the browser goes off to access a link, the focus is changed to another task the user is also interested in. As soon as the link has been completely obtained and is ready for display, the browser takes back focus for itself.

Provision is made for a ring of tasks which are systematically brought up at each wait time. This allows the user to monitor several tasks at once while efficiently browsing the web.

Provision is made for optional minimum amount of time in the secondary application before switching back.

Provision is made for a notification only, such that the browser beeps, or displays a small notification message when ready for display. The notification message can be in the form of a message box, or a blinking alarm in a visible portion of the display.

Provision is made to disallow swapping for certain applications, or during certain times of the day.

Provision is made to distinguish between local (immediate) links and distant (time-consuming) links, and not activate on local links.

Provision is made to wait a number of seconds before swapping allowing for small waits.

Evaluation Questions

If this problem has been solved before, how was it solved?

Swapping back and forth manually, or by displaying the edit session along side the browser session.

Both of these are more cumbersome on smaller displays. On a small display, if the browser is covered, you can't see that it is done, and there is no easy way to select it.

If searching the web is a primary activity at the moment, you can be distracted at the secondary activity and not know when the page is ready for display.

When displayed side by side, the fill-in of the page can be distracting as you work on your secondary task.

Related art: Lotus notes notifies you when new mail is received.

Related art: Unix HEY will pop a message to the top when one arrives.

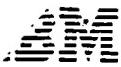
Why is your solution better?

The user is immediately informed and assisted in turning to the priority task at hand as soon as it is available.

This has novelty over mail notification when it automatically swaps to the secondary task as the link is selected and automatically swaps back when the display is ready.

This has novelty over the Hey popup because the secondary application is immediately and automatically brought into use.

In addition, the other options provide improvement over the related art: ability to go to a chain of secondary applications, the determination of local vs remote sources, etc.



Who outside of IBM (competitors) would want to use your solution?

Netscape, Microsoft

How could IBM discover that competitors were using your solution?

Observation.